

QUEEN HIGH, ACE LOW

Curious Spanish Card Game in Which All Our Methods Are Reversed.

SWORDS, CUPS, AND SAUCERS

These Are the Suits in Use—Grotesque System of Signals—Cheating Has Become the Law of the Game.

While the Spanish are a nation of gamblers from the humblest mule driver to the haughtiest Don, they have but very few games of cards. In fact, there is but one that is played in any extent, and a curious game it is to the poker, whist and euchre loving people of other countries. It is known by many different names, but quite generally as "Mano y boca," as the hands and tongue play such an important part in the game.

Deft pantomime and a quick eye are the attributes essential to a good player. The mere playing of the cards requires but little science or practice, for the game itself is very simple and consists of very little more than matching the cards.

The use of a Spanish pack of cards is enough to confuse an American pretty thoroughly at first. They are different from any other cards on the face of the earth, and there is no apparent reason for the difference. To begin with, there are only forty-four cards in the pack, none of the suit having either eight or nine spots. Again, the cards are much smaller than those used in America, smaller, in fact, than the French cards. Still further confusion arises from the signs used to indicate the suits. Hearts, diamonds, spades and clubs are unknown. In their place the Spaniards use suns, swords, cups and saucers. The picture representing the sun, or the "oro," as it is called, is simply a round yellow spot with a jagged edge. The sword (espada) is a pictured short, straight cutlass, with flange work on the blade in the fashion of fancy Toledo workmanship. It is printed in brown ink. The cups and saucers look like the regulation receptacles, for coffee and milk, and are colored blue. Moreover, corresponding cards in the different suits are not of equal value. For instance, the queen of suns has twice the value of the queen of swords, and the queen of swords is worth as much as the queen of cups and the queen of saucers put together. Cups and saucers are concluded equal except when they are matched against each other, and then cups have the preference.

It is also the Spanish custom when playing cards to do everything in a way exactly opposite to that usual in other countries. The cards are always dealt to the right instead of to the left, and from the bottom of the pack, the dealer helping himself first. The ace is counted simply as number one, and is the lowest card. The highest card is the queen. Doubtless her place of honor is the result of Spanish gallantry toward the fair sex; or, possibly it comes from patriotic sentiment, as a queen is now at the head of the nation as regent, while the king is at present in all respects a person of very secondary importance. For that matter Spaniards have never been particularly fortunate with their kings or held them in much esteem. Queens have been the popular favorites. Next in order to the queen comes the king, then the jack, the ten-spot, the seven, and so on down to the ace.

This national game of "Mano y boca" is played almost exclusively in the country districts. Cards are used very little in the large cities except where Americans and Englishmen have introduced poker, whist, euchre etc., which a good many have had the hardihood to do. It is doubtful if a more discouraging task could be found than trying to play poker or whist intelligently with Spanish cards and Spanish customs. More than that, a Spaniard would never admit that his valuation of the cards was wrong and the Yankee idea is right. So if you play cards with a Spaniard you must play his way.

"Mano y boca" is usually played by four people. Six can play it, but with that number the players have to be experts. It is necessary to divide the players into groups of partners of two. One partner is the chief, or striper, the other is the "sign maker." The sign maker indicates to his partner by a well known code of signals just what cards he holds. He is supposed to do it at such opportune moments and so cleverly that the opposition watcher cannot detect the signals. It is the watcher's duty not only to observe his partner's signals, so closely that he will know what cards are indicated, but also to watch the opposition sign maker's signals. If he is an expert and does his work perfectly it follows, of course, that he will know where every card in the pack is. The running out of each suit is then only child's play. If the other watcher is not as well posted he will be pretty sure to lose.

It is the watcher who plays first each time. If he wins the trick he leads again. The playing of the trick consists in leading with some card between a five and a seven-spot. The players then, in rotation lay down cards next in value on either side of the card led. Whichever side runs the suit out first in either direction wins the trick. The point most striven for is to run out on the high end and capture the queen, king or jack, as each of these cards count in a certain number in addition to the value of the trick. When the suit is won on the small end and is run out on the ace, the face cards not played do not count for anyone. They are then discarded as deadwood. Such an event is considered the sign of pretty amateurish playing, as the cards are then simply wasted and lost to both sides.

Only one suit is played at a time. The watcher has the privilege of leading any suit he pleases. Whenever a player cannot play he has to pay a chip into the center of the table. These forfeits are taken in by the side that wins the trick. Chip is not the proper word, however, as the American adjunct to poker is rarely seen in Spain. All the gambling is done with money. In the ordinary game the unit is a copper piece called "a big dog" from the fact that the lion of Castile is stamped on the reverse side of each coin, while the five centimes piece is called the "little dog." Of course there are many people who play for much higher stakes, the silver fifty centimes (ten cents) or the peseta (twenty cents) being made the unit. Occasionally, too, very heavy sports and wild plungers use the duro, or five peseta piece, equal to a dollar, as the unit. Such cases are rare, for a long game on that basis would bankrupt almost any village on the peninsula.

The signals are rather difficult for a novice to use deftly and without detection. A slight upward movement of the right hand from the table indicates that the sign maker has neither of the end cards,—that is, queen or ace—in his hand. To show that he has none of the cards in the upper end of the suit the head is thrown backwards toward the right shoulder. When he has none at the lower end of the suit the same movement is made with the head toward the left shoulder. If he holds the queen he signals it by sticking the tongue into the left cheek; he announces the king by winking the right eye, and the jack by winking the left. Pursing the lips indicates a number of cards in the middle of the suit. Twiddling the fingers of the left hand shows that the sign maker holds all or a majority of the cards at the lower end of the suit except the ace. If it should so happen that the sign maker had none of the cards in the suit led he would so inform his partner by running his tongue around his teeth two or three times. Opening the mouth shows that he does not hold a good hand in any suit.

The suits are indicated by the fingers of the right hand. The first finger for suns, the second finger for swords, third for cups and the little finger for saucers. Moving either of these fingers means that the sign maker has a good hand in that particular suit.

The origin of "Mano y boca" is clouded in the mystery of Spanish legendary lore. Some assert that it dates back to the Moorish occupation, and that the silent and somber race by whom words were never wasted or uttered frivolously played their games with signs rather than demean themselves with idle chatter.

That's all very pretty and poetic, but it probably is not true. In all probability "Mano y boca" is the degenerate product of card games brought into Spain by the English and French soldiers during the Peninsula war. The Spaniards like to win as well as anybody else, and the sign element is undoubtedly the offspring of some Spanish card sharper's systematic scheme to cheat. Quite likely his system was so successful that it attracted favorable notice and was universally adopted, so that in time it became a recognized part of the game.

He Salted the Diggings.
From the Portland Oregonian.

Several men have been employed for the past day or two in repairing the approach to the Mission street bridge and yesterday they had a picnic. While tearing up the worn-out planks one of the men found a bright silver quarter of a dollar. He exhibited it exultingly to his comrades and told them he had "struck it rich." One of the others said it looked as if the distribution of free silver had begun and proposed, as it was a warm day, they all go over to the corner and have some cool beer. This met with the approval of the lucky finder of the coin and he "set 'em up" for the boys. An hour or so after one of the men found two dimes and a nickel in the dirt when a plank had been removed and he "set 'em up." All hands kept a bright lookout for more coins, but for some time in vain; but, as one had remarked regretfully that he guessed "the diggin's had petered out," another picked up a half dollar. The men had become very thirsty by this time and they immediately repaired to the corner and the half dollar was quickly transformed into beer, which went hissing down their throats. By this it was time to go home and the men got aboard a car and started for their dinner. Soon the conductor came around for their fares. Two paid and the third ran his hand down into his pocket and found nothing but a hole through the bottom. A blank look came over his face for a moment and then he said to one of his friends: "You will have to pay my fare, for you have been drinking beer on my money all the afternoon."

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Chas. M. Webster

Regular nominee of the Republican State Convention for the office of Treasurer of the State of Montana, respectfully solicits the support of the citizens of Montana.
CHARLES M. WEBSTER.

T. E. Collins

Regular nominee of the Democratic and Populist State Conventions for the office of Treasurer of the State of Montana, respectfully solicits the support of the citizens of Montana.
T. E. COLLINS.

Chas. H. Benton

Regular nominee of the Republican Convention for the office of Judge of the Eighth Judicial District, respectfully solicits the support of the citizens of Montana.
CHARLES H. BENTON.

Chas. C. Proctor

Regular nominee of the Republican Convention for the office of Sheriff of Cascade County, respectfully solicits the support of the voters of the county.
CHARLES C. PROCTOR.

John T. Athey

Regular nominee of the Republican Convention for the office of Clerk of the District Court of Cascade County, respectfully solicits the support of the voters of the county.
JOHN T. ATHEY.

The Grandest Remedy.
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